

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 TRSE-00 OMB-01 IO-13 AID-05 ACDA-07 EB-07

OES-07 AF-10 DLOS-09 COME-00 /114 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7529

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 6668

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JA, KS, JKN

SUBJ: NORTH KOREAN VISITORS TO JAPAN

REF: TOKYO 6532

1. GOJ, SENSITIVE TO UNFORTUNATE IMPACT PROSPECTIVE NORTH KOREAN VISIT IS HAVING ON ROK RELATIONS, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF DELAY IN RATIFICATION OF CONTINENTAL SHELF AGREEMENT, HAS CONTINUED TO DOWNPLAY VISIT'S SIGNIFICANCE. JUSTICE MINISTER FUKUDA ANNOUNCED TO PRESS MAY 4 THAT ENTRY PERMISSION HAD BEEN CONDITIONAL ON NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION'S REFRAINING FROM ANY POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, NOTING THAT FAILURE TO ABIDE BY THIS CONDITION WOULD JEOPARDIZE ENTRY OF FUTURE NORTH KOREAN GROUPS. PRESS HAS CHARACTERIZED FUKUDA'S STIPULATION AS "UNUSUAL AND STRICT WARNING."

2. FONOFF NORTHEAST ASIA DIVDIR ENDO HAS REITERATED TO EMBOFFS THAT ENTRY OF NORTH KOREAN GROUP DID NOT REPRESENT ANY CHANGE IN GOJ POLICY AND THAT GROUP'S ACTIVITIES WOULD BE LIMITED TO "ECONOMIC DISCUSSIONS" WITH MEMBERS OF JAPAN-KOREA PARLIAMENTARIANS FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION. WITH EXCEPTION OF FORMER AMBASSADOR HYON, DELEGATION WAS NOT "PARLIAMENTARIAN" IN NATURE, BUT RATHER CONSISTED OF "UNIMPORTANT" STAFF OF VARIOUS NORTH KOREAN FRONT ORGANIZATIONS
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SUCH AS "KOREAN AFRO-ASIAN UNITY COMMITTEE."

3. ROK EMBASSY MINISTER SOON KUN CHUNG, TEMPORARILY IN CHARGE OF ROK MISSION DURING HOSPITALIZATION OF AMBASSADOR YOUNG SUN KIM, EITHER UNAWARE OF FUKUDA REMARKS OR CHOOSING TO IGNORE THEM, MAY 7 SPOKE BITTERLY TO POLCOUNS ABOUT VISIT AND CURRENT STATE OF ROK-JAPANESE RELATIONS. HE CLAIMED HE HAD RECEIVED ASSURANCE FROM

GOJ JUST ONE WEEK PRIOR TO VISIT ANNOUNCEMENT THAT ENTRY REQUEST WOULD BE DENIED, AND ASKED WHETHER US EMBASSY HAD ASKED FONOFF TO MAKE SURE VISITORS WOULD ESCHEW POLITICAL ACTIVITY -- CHUNG HAD NOT DONE SO INASMUCH AS HIS EMBASSY WAS STILL TRYING TO TURN VISIT OFF. WE INFORMED CHUNG THAT WE HAD BEEN TOLD THERE WOULD BE NO OFFICIAL CONTACT WITH VISITORS AND FELT ASSURED FONOFF AND OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WERE SENSITIVE TO ROK CONCERNS (WE WERE UNAWARE AT TIME OF JUSTICE MINISTER'S STATEMENT); WE HAD NOT GONE SO FAR, HOWEVER, AS TO SUGGEST JSUT HOW JAPANESE SHOULD HANDLE VISIT. WHEN POLCOUNS INDICATED JAPANESE APPARENTLY FELT IT WOULD WORSEN PROSPECTS FOR DIET RATIFICATION OF CONTINENTAL SHELF AGREEMENT WERE ENTRY TO BE DENIED (TOKYO 6532), CHUNG ACKNOWLEDGED HE HAD BEEN TOLD AS MUCH. NONETHELESS, HE INSISTED THAT JAPANESE COULD NOT BE TRUSTED AND A NUMBER OF PERSONS WERE TALKING ABOUT JAPANESE-ROK RELATIONS ENTERING ANOTHER PERIOD OF DETERIORATION AND HIGH TENSION -- "PRIMIN FUKUDA WAS NO BETTER THAN MIKI IN DOING ANYTHING FOR THE ROK." POLCOUNS RESPONDED THAT RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS WITH WHOM WE HAD TALKED SEEMED SINCERELY COMMITTED TO EFFORT TO HAVE CONTINENTAL SHELF AGREEMENT RATIFIED, EVEN THOUGH THERE WAS NO GUARANTEE THEY WOULD SUCCEED. (PRIMIN AND FONMIN ON RETURN FROM LONDON MAY 10 ARE TO GO TO DIET FROM PLANESIDE TO SECURE LOWER HOUSE PASSAGE.) IT WOULD NOT HELP MATTERS, HOWEVER, TO LAUNCH CAMPAIGN CHARGING JAPANESE BAD FAITH: THAT COULD ONLY BE SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY. CHUNG, INCIDENTALLY, WHO SEEMED TIRED AND UNHAPPY, WAS SLATED TO LEAVE IN TEN DAYS EN ROUTE TO TAKING UP DUTIES AS AMBASSADOR TO UGANDA; HE MAY NOW STAY THROUGH DIET SESSION.

4. COMMENT. IN ADDITION TO POSSIBLE IMMEDIATE ADVERSE EFFECT OF DENIAL ON RATIFICATION OF CONTINENTAL SHELF AGREEMENT, THERE ARE CONFIDENTIAL

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SEVERAL POSSIBLE FACTORS BEHIND JAPANESE DECISION TO ALLOW NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION'S ENTRY:

--EXISTING GOJ POLICY, AS ENUNCIATED BY FONMIN HATOYAMA BEFORE DIET IN JANUARY, SUPPORTS INCREASED "ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL" CONTACT BETWEEN JAPAN AND DPRK. FONOFF ASSERTS THAT DENIAL OF ENTRY PERMISSION IN THIS INSTANCE WOULD BE TRUMPETED BY OPPOSITION AS INCONSISTENT REJECTION OF THAT POLICY AND WOULD ULTIMATELY CREATE MORE POLITICAL PROBLEMS FOR ROK'S SUPPORTERS IN JAPAN THAN IT WOULD SOLVE.

--FONOFF OFFICIALS PRIVATELY NOTE THAT AS SEA OF JAPAN BECOMES DIVIDED BY INDIVIDUAL STATES' EXPANDED FISHING ZONES, IT IS LIKELY THAT AT SOME POINT IT WILL BECOME NECESSARY TO HAVE SOME CONTACT WITH NORTH KOREANS ON FISHING MATTERS. USE OF PRIVATE EXCHANGES SUCH AS KUNO'S JAPAN-KOREA PARLIAMENTARIAN FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION MIGHT OBIATE NEED FOR MORE FORMAL, GOVERNMENTAL CONTACT.

--FINALLY, AT TIME WHEN USG IS MOVING FORWARD IN REMOVING TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS, IT BECOMES INCREASINGLY AWKWARD FOR GOJ TO ADOPT MORE RIGID STANCE ON NORTH KOREAN VISITS.
SHOESMITH

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